21: Belshaw E-5 (1951) 1951 QJ23 Orokaiva QJ23
Mount Lamington

Before the eruption, a new type of village had been established in the Kokoda sub-district, consisting of a large village square of neatly clipped grass, with houses arranged in a single row along three sides of it. Although such villages have a monotonous regularity and lack of individual character, Europeans think of them as being aesthetically attractive, and they appeal to the administrative officer's sense of the fitness of uniformity in a well-ordered community. Attempts to introduce such villages in the Higaturu sub-district had largely failed, and the standard of housing was much lower. Further the people of this area tended to live in small clan-hamlets and resisted propaganda for them to come together into larger village groups. After the eruption, however, the general desire for new things, the sense of guilt at having resisted such innovations before, and a feeling of insecurity combined to make most of the people reconsider their earlier decisions. Although the move was not quite universal, by far the greater proportion of people decided to rebuild their homes in large village units situated close to existing or proposed jeep roads, and on administrative advice decided to follow the Kokoda village plan with substantially improved housing. Such a move raises numerous social problems.

The actual decision as to who should live together in a village group was by and large easy to make. Mr. Plant's enquiry, referred to earlier, showed that individual patrilineal clans are often segments of a maximal lineage, the other segments of which live in different areas, and this finding accords with Williams' material. But in a given hamlet there would be two or more clans, not segments of the same lineage; and a number of hamlets occupying neighbouring ground would be considered together as a single village-group. Sometimes the village-groups were combined as a large area-group. Thus we have the hamlets Pengipe, Isivita, Huworituru and Bosiseta combining as Isivita No. 1 village; Egaturu, Tambori, Koropata and Kiorata as Tambori village; and Kakita, Hamamuta, Pija and Popondota as Popondota village; and the village-groups of Isivita No. 1, Tambori and Popondota, together with separate hamlets of Barewaturu and Kombeturu constitute the area-group of Isivita No. 1. Just how far these groupings result from administrative practice we cannot tell, but it is fairly certain that they represent genuinely-felt units. This does not, however, necessarily apply to the combination of the area-groups into tribal groups. Though the people we are considering appear to be one in language and custom, and to regard neighbouring groups as somewhat different, they are vague as to an over-all group name. Williams calls this group the Wasida tribe; Plant considers the correct name to be Periho. Although I think Plant is more correct than Williams on this point, it seems to me that the people themselves do not attach much importance to such a name.

The village-group was taken by the people as the new unit of residence. The earlier hamlets would take a side or section of a side of the village square, each clan building its houses contiguously. This meant that the residential group increased in size from units of 20 to 100, to units of 125 to 400. Further, the village-groups were much closer together, sometimes now being in sight of each other along the

177 part of village layouts, are a blend of Papuan tradition (the Orokaiva
[351] have always been very fond of flowers and planted ornamental shrubs)
[363] and a new Australian-derived passion for military regularity. This is evident especially in the emphasis placed on building the houses in a line, and equidistant; the shrubs are also rigidly in line.

177 The changes are to some extent due to the experience of Ilimo
342 camp which is reflected in the style of Old Sivepe. The changes found in New Sivepe are due to subsequent influences, mainly that of the Local Government Council. Once village improvement became an ideologically validated objective, the way was open to the adoption of further innovations borrowed from the Kokoda district, such as the use of "timber." I did not see "timber" used East of the Sasembata district.

[182] It may well be that the increase in house size, coupled with the present need to build a large number of houses in the same year to form a major modern village, would rapidly have led to a critical shortage of sago in Sivepe if people had continued to use this material for walls. Thus, the present practice of using timber instead of sago could well have an economic explanation. Sago roofs can be built without destroying the plants, whereas plants have to be cut entirely to produce sago walls. I was not, however, given an economic explanation for the change-over to timber; I was told only that it was better-looking and provided good protection against wind and rain. But nobody would say anything against sago; sago walls are "also very good."

177 Tools and skills: Traditional agriculture has undergone considerable
241 change, as elsewhere in New Guinea, by the introduction of steel axes,
[412] bush knives, grubbers etc. Thus the preparation of the soil for gardening has been greatly facilitated. There has, however, been no change in the operations concerned with the plants themselves, planting and harvesting being done with wooden digging sticks. Many of the men have had experience in rubber plantations, with operations such as tapping; there are a few tapping chisels in the village. Training in coffee cultivation occurred after the eruption, but it was not until a few years ago that hulling machines were introduced. Every grower

177 at Sivepe has, as far as I know, only one coffee sack. The basic
245 skills needed to bring rubber and coffee to market have been mastered,
249 but up-to-date techniques for improving the yield of the trees have not been mastered. The difficulty, in this respect, is not purely one of communication, as men who have been employed as rubber tappers must be familiar with certain rules regarding care of the trees which are definitely not being practised. Similarly, I doubt whether one can explain failure, on the part of Sivepe growers, to prune their coffee trees by ignorance of pruning techniques. The true explanation would appear to be a lack of confidence that the rules make any difference to the yields. In Hohorita people began to prune their coffee trees when they discovered they were then easier to harvest. But the whole pattern of reasoning upon which Western horticultural practises are

22: Schwimmer E-4,5 (1966-1967) 1969 OJ23 Orokaiva OJ23
Mount Lamington

423
361
102
621
363
311

Map III

Source: Rimoldi 1966: 52

[End Map 2]